United Nations A/55/PV.88

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

88th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 December 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 173 (*continued*)

Towards global partnerships

Draft resolution (A/55/L.71)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this item at its 45th plenary meeting, on 31 October 2000.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.71.

Before action is taken on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since its publication the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.71: Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Namibia, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovenia and South Africa.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.71?

Draft resolution A/55/L.71 was adopted (resolution 55/215).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 173?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 30 (*continued*)

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review

Draft resolution (A/55/L.68)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on this item at its 57th plenary meeting, on 10 November 2000.

I now give the floor to the representative of Madagascar to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.68.

Mr. Bakoniarivo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): The debate held on 10 November 2000 on agenda item 30 highlighted the fact that, although progress had been made since the Secretary-General's 1998 progress report on this item, several factors continue to hinder Africa's development. The situation is eloquently described in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/55/350.

Draft resolution A/55/L.68, which I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly on behalf of the members of the Group of African States and the sponsors, is designed to continue the high-priority attention being given to Africa until the continent achieves a level of growth conducive to sustainable development. In addition to the countries listed in A/55/L.68, India and Singapore have also joined the draft resolution as sponsors.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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In its preambular part, the draft resolution recalls that while the primary responsibility for the development of Africa remains with African countries, the support and assistance of the international community are essential to the continent's economic recovery.

While the General Assembly welcomes in the draft resolution international and bilateral efforts and initiatives on behalf of Africa, it also notes its grave concern at the limited progress, particularly with regard to poverty eradication. Despite considerable efforts made by African countries to establish an economic and political environment conducive to development, Africa continues to face serious problems as a result of, among other things, the debt burden, the drop in official development assistance, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infections diseases, and its diminished share of world trade.

In the draft resolution the Assembly also urges the immediate implementation of debt relief programmes, particularly for heavily indebted poor countries. It also calls for Africa's full integration into the world economy, as well as for increased financial resources to the continent. The Assembly also calls for the entire international community, the Bretton Woods institutions in particular, to pursue with renewed vigour and as a matter of urgency the realization of the goals and objectives of the New Agenda.

The draft resolution also stresses the need to strengthen the coordinating mechanism to harmonize initiatives on behalf of Africa so as to make them more effective. In that connection, the draft resolution proposes the adoption by the United Nations of an integrated approach to Africa.

Finally, by this draft resolution the General Assembly would, in preparation for the final review and appraisal scheduled for 2002, stress the importance of a judicious and independent high-level evaluation of the New Agenda based on a set of performance indicators to measure the progress made.

Africa is again looking to the international community for solidarity in order to attain the objectives set forth in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa. The adoption of this draft resolution would certainly serve to encourage Africa to intensify its own efforts to enter successfully into the new millennium. It is now time for Africans to reap the fruits of their efforts and move from a still fragile state to more solid foundations so that they may have a more certain future.

In conclusion, we thank all the delegations that participated in the consultations on this draft resolution and those that joined the African countries as co-sponsors. The Group of African States and the co-sponsors of the draft resolution hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/55/L.68.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Perfiliev (Director of General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs): Before they take action on draft resolution A/55/L.68, I should like to inform members that, by operative paragraph 14 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to submit an independent and objective evaluation of the New Agenda to the General Assembly not later than 31 May 2002.

It is the intention of the Secretary-General to entrust the preparation of the evaluation to a team of experts, which would be composed of an eminent person to oversee the evaluation and of six high-level experts — three from donor countries, two from Africa and one from other developing countries. It is expected that the team of experts would carry out the evaluation during a period of five months and would travel to Africa, Asia, Europe and North America for consultations.

The preliminary cost of this task is estimated to amount to $360,000. Of this amount, $240,000 would be required in 2001 and $120,000 in 2002. It is considered that the amount of $240,000 needed for 2001 could be absorbed from the resources appropriated from the current biennium and that the amount of $120,000 required for 2002 would be reflected in the proposals for the biennium 2002-2003.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.68, entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.68?

The resolution was adopted (resolution 55/216).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 30?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 50 (*continued*)

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Draft resolution (A/55/37/Rev.1 and Corr.1)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on agenda item 50 at its 47th and 48th plenary meetings on 1 November 2000.

I now give the floor to the representative of Madagascar to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.37/Rev.1.

Mr. Bakoniarivo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour, on behalf of the Group of African States and the sponsors, to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.37/Rev.1. The following countries have joined as cosponsors: Australia, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal. The draft resolution, entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable and sustainable development in Africa", falls under agenda item 50.

The debate we held on this item on 1 November led to a general recognition that the development of Africa depends, inter alia, on preventing conflicts. This concept is reflected in the preamble to the draft resolution, wherein the General Assembly would reaffirm the close linkage between peace, security and development and the need for a comprehensive implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, contained in his report in document A/52/871.

The report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, contained in document A/55/45, pointed to the lack of political will as one of the major obstacles to the implementation of those recommendations. Thus, in the preamble to the draft resolution, the General Assembly would emphasize the need to strengthen further the political will that is indispensable for the successful implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the proposals of the Working Group.

Considering that the proposals made by the Working Group in paragraphs 25 to 57 of chapter IV its report would help to promote peace and development in Africa, the General Assembly, in operative paragraph 3, would encourage Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant international and regional institutions, within their respective mandates, to take necessary measures to fully implement the proposals made by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group.

The General Assembly would also stress the role of the Security Council in ensuring a coordinated and integrated implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General in the areas of peace and security. It would request the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2001, to consider the proposals of the Working Group contained in chapter IV of its report.

With a view to enabling the Group to carry out its tasks under resolution 54/234, the Assembly would decide to extend the mandate of the Working Group until the fifty-sixth session, and would request the Secretary-General and the Working Group to submit progress reports to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

The Assembly is in a unique position to make the dream of peace and development come true for Africa. Our belief in that leads the African Group and the sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.37/Rev.1 to hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus in order to realize the commitment made in chapter VII of the Millennium Declaration.

I wish in conclusion to thank all delegations, in particular our development partners, for their valuable assistance in preparing this draft resolution, which is of paramount importance to Africa. We wish also to thank all the countries that have been kind enough to join in sponsoring the draft resolution.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/55/L.37/Rev.1.

Before calling on the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote or position, I remind delegations that explanations of vote

are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Snyder (United States of America): The United States participated in the discussions concerning the draft resolution entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" in a spirit of compromise. We would like to clarify our position on specific measures set out in the report of the General Assembly's Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on that topic (A/55/45). While we agree with many of the report's observations and proposed actions, we have reservations about some of its proposals.

First, we are convinced that aid under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative should not be wasted on States still engaged in conflicts.

Secondly, our position is that official bilateral debt relief should not be de-linked from the HIPC process of the international financial institutions, either unilaterally or through the Paris Club. That would reduce the leverage of the international financial institutions to encourage economic reform.

Thirdly, at present only the international financial institutions arbitrate the extent to which external debt is sustainable. We do not agree that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should be given a role in making that assessment.

Fourthly, United States Government policy opposes expanding HIPC debt relief to middle-income countries. That would have significant budget implications.

Finally, the United States has not agreed to the 0.7 per cent target for official development assistance.

Despite those concerns, the United States is willing to join consensus on this draft resolution.

The President: Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, Ireland and Sweden have become sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.37/Rev.1.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.37/Rev.1. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/55/L.37/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 55/217).

The President: Before calling on the representative of Japan, who wishes to speak in explanation of position, I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): My delegation did not join in sponsoring the draft resolution on causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, as it has a few problems with some paragraphs in the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on that issue, for the same reasons as relate to agenda item 30, "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review", and agenda item 27, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity".

Nevertheless, the Government of Japan continues to work to achieve tangible results in international efforts to bring about poverty eradication, economic growth, the integration of African economies into the world economy and human-resource development, based upon the Tokyo Agenda for Action, which was adopted at the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development. The Government of Japan wishes to call upon the international community and the United Nations to commit themselves to the further development of Africa.

The President: I should now like to make an announcement concerning the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

We have just adopted draft resolution A/55/L.37/Rev.1, and have thereby extended the mandate of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group until the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

In that regard, I have conducted intensive consultations, and it is now a great pleasure to announce, as already indicated to all regional groups on 4 December, my decision to appoint his Excellency Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, and to reappoint his Excellency Mr. Inocencio Arias, Permanent Representative of Spain, as the two Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the

Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

Mr. Rahmtalla (Sudan): I am taking the floor, Mr. President, to respond to your announcement in my capacity as coordinator of the African group of experts on economic matters — the Second Committee African representatives.

We are grateful to you for the appointment of the Permanent Representative of Pakistan and the reappointment of the Permanent Representative of Spain to chair the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the causes of conflict in Africa and also to take this opportunity to express our profound appreciation and gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Singapore, the outgoing co-Chairman.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 50.

Agenda item 27

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Draft resolution (A/55/L.67)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held its debate on this item at its 53rd plenary meeting, on 7 November 2000.

I give the floor to the representative of Togo to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.67.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Following the debate which the General Assembly held on 7 September on agenda item 27, which concerns cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), it is my honour to introduce, on behalf of the States members of the OAU, the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.67.

In its preambular part, the draft refers to the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU and emphasizes the events that have occurred this year directed towards strengthening regional and international cooperation.

First, at the thirty-sixth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held in Lomé last July, a number of decisions were adopted that reflect the determination of the States of the continent to continue to promote peace, stability and sustainable development in Africa despite the enormous difficulties they are facing.

Also, at the Millennium Summit, more than 100 heads of State or Government reaffirmed the need to find appropriate solutions to the many challenges facing our world, and in particular the specific needs of Africa.

With regard to the particularly difficult situation of the African countries, which is characterized by a considerable lack of stability, a pronounced weakening of national economies and the ongoing deterioration of health conditions, the draft emphasizes the need for the OAU to continue to work, in partnership with the United Nations, to strengthen African capacities in the area of the maintenance of peace and to establish a foundation for sustainable development in Africa.

In its operative part, the draft resolution notes with satisfaction the level of cooperation between the two organizations and encourages the Secretary-General of the United Nations to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Liaison Office in Addis Ababa. The Secretary-General is also invited to closely involve the OAU in the implementation of the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, especially those that relate to meeting the special needs of Africa.

Moreover, the Secretary-General is requested to take the necessary measures to implement the recommendations of the most recent annual meeting of the two organizations, in particular those relating to priority programmes of the OAU, as specified in section III of the report of the Secretary-General.

With regard to the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa, the text invites the United Nations to intensify its assistance to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in strengthening its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa, and to continue to work to strengthen African capacities with regard to the maintenance of peace.

Concerning the socio-economic area, the draft resolution requests the competent United Nations agencies to include in their national, subregional and regional programmes activities to support African

countries in their efforts to enhance regional economic cooperation and integration.

The draft also calls upon the United Nations agencies to intensify the coordination of their regional programmes in Africa to ensure the effective harmonization of their programmes with those of the African regional and subregional economic organizations and contribute to creating a positive environment for economic development and investment. It calls upon the United Nations to actively support the efforts of the OAU to increase official development assistance. The draft also emphasizes that the question of African indebtedness should be given greater attention by the donor community.

Lastly, it reaffirms the need to provide additional assistance to the Organization of African Unity and to African States to enable them to cope with the problems of refugees, displaced persons and returnees.

Last-minute discussions, particularly among certain African delegations — unfortunately, I was unable to consult all African delegations; I hope that they will not take it amiss — held in a spirit of compromise, enabled us to agree, on behalf of the African States, to the proposed revision of paragraph 11. Paragraph 11 has been revised to read as follows:

(spoke in English)

> "*Calls upon* the United Nations to actively support the efforts of the Organization of African Unity in urging the donor community and, where appropriate, multilateral institutions to strive to meet the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance, to implement fully, speedily and effectively the enhanced programme of debt relief for the heavily indebted poor countries, and to achieve the goal of securing debt relief in a comprehensive and effective manner in favour of African countries through various national and international measures designed to make their debts sustainable in the long term".

(spoke in French)

The draft resolution, as revised and submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration, has the advantage of being more concise than last year's text and reflects the concerns of both the African States and Africa's partners, as the result of lengthy discussions with those partners.

Accordingly, I should like to express the sincere hope of the African States that the text will be adopted without a vote by the General Assembly.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.67, as orally revised.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.67, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/55/L.67, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 55/218).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 27?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.